

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
SAN LUIS VALLEY FIELD OFFICE**

**DECISION RECORD**

San Francisco Creek #1 Application for Permit to Drill

DOI-BLM-CO-300-2012-0012-EA

**DECISION:** It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the attached Environmental Assessment.

The proposed action is to construct a well pad and an access road in order to drill and develop federal minerals from a privately-owned surface. Access to the proposed well pad would be on existing county and rural roads. The proposed project is located in Rio Grande County, Colorado, 5 miles south of the town of Del Norte. The federal mineral estate within the project boundary is leased and subject to oil and gas development.

The San Francisco Creek #1 includes a proposed access road that would be approximately 1,320 feet in length with 40 foot wide disturbance during construction, and 14 foot running width. The project would include construction of a drill pad with a surface disturbance of approximately 2.3 acres, with max cut of 6.95 feet and max fill of 8.43 feet. The pad will be enclosed with straw bales to berm around the entire well pad to minimize drilling noise, fugitive dust, and reduce visual impacts. The straw bales are 4 feet tall and 8 feet long and will be stacked three high for a total height of 12 feet. Sediment fences will be constructed to minimize sediment deposition in a nearby ephemeral drainage and the access road.

In the event of a dry hole the pad and access road will be graded to original contour, topsoil replaced and the entire area reseeded. Rehabilitation of the well pads and access roads are bonded to ensure compliance with BLM reclamation requirements. The proposed action would include well drilling and completion operations, which would take approximately 45 days.

The proposed action was analyzed in the Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-CO-300-2012-0012-EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact was reached; therefore, an EIS will not be prepared.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** On August 20, 2012, the San Luis Valley Field Office announced a 30-day scoping period for the San Francisco Creek #1 Application for Permit to Drill (APD)

Environmental Assessment. The BLM also held a public scoping meeting on September 6, 2012 at the Rio Grande County Annex in Del Norte. Over the course of the 30-day period the BLM received 42 written comments addressing a wide range of resource concerns.

The public comments we received identified many issues that we address within this environmental analysis, such as water and air quality (sections 3.2.4 & 3.2.1), wildlife (section.3.3), visual resources (section 3.4.3), and geology (section 3.2.2).

However, there were also scoping comments that did not trigger BLM's guidance on what is considered an issue requiring analysis under NEPA. Some examples of those concerns include statements about whether or not oil and gas development is necessary (generally expressed as a "favor" or "oppose" position statement); concerns regarding potential for a larger oil field development if producible quantities of minerals are discovered (outside the scope of this analysis); and the effect of local land-use ordinances on BLM authority (previously decided by law).

The BLM also received many comments encouraging consideration of the Rio Grande County Hydrology study. While not generally part of a routine environmental analysis for an APD, the BLM was able to work cooperatively with the Rio Grande County team to consider their findings within our analysis.

The BLM released a draft version of this environmental analysis on June 18, 2013 and extended the comment period for a total of 45 days. The BLM received over 40 comments on the draft and carefully considered every comment. Based on the comments received, we supplemented, improved, and modified this analysis where appropriate. Additionally, the BLM has summarized some of the most common comments and provided written responses in Appendix A – Written Comment Responses.

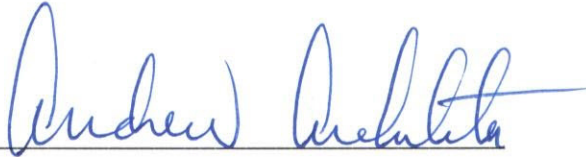
**RATIONALE:** This APD will attempt to develop oil and gas resources on Federal Minerals Lease COC-069530, consistent with existing Federal lease rights provided for in the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended. The project area has a moderate degree of alteration in the form of farming and ranching operations, road, homes, and fences. The addition of the infrastructure needed to construct and drill the exploratory well will have a temporary and nonsignificant impact on the resources present in the project area.

**MITIGATION MEASURES\MONITORING:** This decision is contingent on meeting all mitigation measures and monitoring requirements included in the APD Conditions of Approval, as attached to this decision record.

**PROTEST/APPEALS:** This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer, and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior

Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at the San Luis Valley Field Office, 46525 Highway 114, Saguache, CO 81149. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Archuleta", written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Archuleta, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

6 January 2014

ATTACHMENTS: Conditionals of Approval, San Francisco Creek #1 APD.